





HOW TO USE CELEBRATED UNITS

Middle and High School (6-12)

OVERVIEW:

ANC's Celebrated Units series provides materials teachers can use to increase student understanding of particularly famous or noteworthy military units. Focusing on these units and their individual members helps students understand both the wide variety of contributions Americans have made during wartime and the personal price paid by many varied individuals.

Some units faced discrimination and unequal treatment. Some units had particularly distinguished records. All units highlighted in this series served their country admirably and made a lasting impact on the U.S.

Estimated time: 15-20 minutes per unit

STANDARDS & LEARNING OBJECTIVES

These are found in individual unit lesson plans.

IDEAS FOR USING MATERIALS:

Whole Class Use:

- PowerPoint Lecture: Each Celebrated Unit includes a recommended lesson plan with instructions for
 presenting the material in a whole class lecture format. Students are provided an accompanying
 worksheet to fill out during the mini lesson.
- Celebrated Units Journal: Generic journal pages can be printed and used for each Celebrated Unit. These can be cut out and glued into students' interactive journals or multiple units could be compiled as student mini books.

Small Group or Individual Use:

Celebrated units can be grouped in different ways: Segregated Units, Units that Served in World War II, etc. Using multiple units with a common theme introduces students to a larger number of units than they might otherwise be exposed to.

If using multiple units, it's recommended that you print the slides with notes. Students will focus on individual units either independently or in small groups. For these activities, it's recommended that you print at least one copy per group. You may also choose to print the accompanying worksheet for individuals or small groups to fill out or have them fill put notes in a Celebrated Units Journal Page.

• Stations: Printed slides are organized at stations around the room. Students move from station to station (working independently or in groups) to fill in notes, unit worksheets, or unit journal pages.

CELEBRATED MILITARY UNITS IDEAS FOR USE MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL 1







HISTORY EDUCATION SERIES



- Jigsaw: Working individually or as a group, students review the information in their assigned PowerPoint and complete the unit worksheet, fill out the journal page, or take notes. After time to discuss their answers or notes with those in their group, students are sorted into a second group. This second group has at least one person who studied each unit. Students then share with each other the information they found out about each unit, filling in their own notes or journal pages as applicable. This activity allows students to complete a larger quantity of notes more quickly as a group than they could individually.
- Extension Activities: Materials can also be used by students who finish work quickly and would benefit from additional content to explore. Students could also use the PowerPoints as a jumping off point for conducting their own research about one of the Celebrated Units or notable members of the unit.

CELEBRATED MILITARY UNITS IDEAS FOR USE MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL 2







LESSON PLAN:

United States Colored Troops

Middle School (6-8) or High School (9-12)

OVERVIEW:

Students learn about the United States Colored Troops and make connections to their prior knowledge in order to explore the significance of this celebrated military unit in historical and cultural context.

The term United States Colored Troops, or U.S.C.T., is the official U.S. Army name for Civil War regiments composed of African Americans. Although the units that composed the U.S.C.T. existed only for a short time, they provided invaluable service in restoring the Union. Though African Americans had fought during the Revolutionary War, the formation of the U.S.C.T. represented the first time the U.S. Army actively recruited African Americans, and their service opened the door for future generations of African Americans in the military.

Resources include a PowerPoint slide deck and handout. Students use the handout to answer questions before, during, and after the PowerPoint presentation.

Estimated time: 1 class period, 15-20 minutes total

STANDARDS:

National Council for the Social Studies Standards

- NCSS.D2.His.1.9-12: Evaluate how historical events and developments were shaped by unique circumstances of time and place as well as broader historical contexts.
- NCSS.D2.His.3.9-12: Use questions generated about individuals and groups to assess how the significance of their actions changes over time and is shaped by the historical context.
- NCSS.D2.His.1.6-8: Analyze connections among events and developments in broader historical contexts.
- NCSS.D2.His.3.9-12: Use questions generated about individuals and groups to analyze why they, and the developments they shaped, are seen as historically significant.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Students will describe challenges faced by the U.S.C.T. and their legacy.
- Students will explain connections between the story of the U.S.C.T. and other topics discussed in class.

RESOURCES NEEDED:

• U.S.C.T. PowerPoint presentation

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• Copies of "U.S.C.T." student handout (one per student)

LESSON BACKGROUND:

This information will provide students with a general background on the history of segregation within U.S. society and the U.S. military. Share this information as needed to fill gaps in student understanding of these concepts and prepare them for the lesson content.

Segregation in America

The American Civil War (1861-1865) began as a war to preserve the Union of the United States of America. By its end, enslaved African Americans were freed and the practice of slavery in this nation was abolished. Following the Civil War, there was promise of racial equality. The United States ratified three constitutional amendments—the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments—that guaranteed African Americans' legal status as United States citizens, and Congress passed civil rights legislation intended to provide them with educational and economic opportunities. However, state and local governments, largely but not entirely in the South, passed laws that restricted these newly granted freedoms. These laws included the racial segregation of public facilities (so-called "Jim Crow" laws), as well as poll taxes and literacy requirements that limited African Americans' ability to vote.

In 1896, the U.S. Supreme Court made racial segregation legal, ruling in *Plessy v. Ferguson* that the principle of "**separate but equal**" did not violate the 14th Amendment. After this ruling, America embraced segregation. Blacks and whites were kept separate in schools, restaurants, public transportation and even bathrooms; however, they were not equal.

Almost 60 years later, on May 17, 1954, the Supreme Court unanimously reversed the Plessy ruling, deciding in *Brown v. Board of Education* that separate schools were not equal and therefore the segregation of public schools was unlawful. This was a major victory for African Americans and civil rights activists; however, desegregation was neither immediate nor easy. Some white Americans opposed and even violently protested the integration of schools, restaurants and other public facilities.

After *Brown v. Board*, which only applied to public schools, it took African American activists and their allies another 10 years to secure passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which barred racial discrimination in the workplace and public spaces. Additional civil rights legislation included the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which gave the federal government oversight in state and local elections to protect African Americans' right to vote, and the Civil Rights Act of 1968, which provided equal housing opportunities regardless of race, creed, or national origin and made it a federal crime to injure or intimidate anyone because of their race, color, religion, or national origin.

Segregation in the U.S. Military

The history of segregation within the U.S. military is similar to that of segregation in U.S. society at large: a slow march toward progress with many steps backward along the way. Approximately 5,000 African Americans served alongside whites in Continental Army regiments during the Revolutionary War, and some served with American forces during the War of 1812. After 1815, state and federal laws and







In July 1862, in the midst of the Civil War, Congress authorized the recruitment of Black soldiers, and after the Emancipation Proclamation in January 1863 the Army established the Bureau of Colored Troops to supervise the units of the United States Colored Troops (USCT). Through World War II (1941-1945), most African Americans who wished to serve in the U.S. armed forces were assigned to segregated, all-Black units, often overseen by white officers. Although these segregated units served with valor and distinction, they received less support than white units and regularly had to deal with discrimination, unequal benefits and assignment to difficult duties such as building fortifications and occupying southern states during the years after the war.

On July 26, 1948, President Harry S. Truman issued Executive Order 9981, mandating equality of treatment and opportunity in the U.S. military, to include burial at national cemeteries such as Arlington, regardless of race. Over the next few years, each of the military service branches (Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force and Coast Guard) implemented the executive order in different ways until the U.S. military was fully racially integrated by late 1954.

Segregation at Arlington National Cemetery

Following the segregation practices of the U.S. military, for many decades Arlington National Cemetery required African American service members to be interred in segregated sections. Prior to World War II, African American service members were buried in Section 27 (from the Civil War through 1899), Section 23 (from 1900 through the 1920s), Section 19 (repatriations from World War I (1917-1918)), and Section 25 (from the late 1920s until 1948). It is important to consider how segregation affected not only the location of gravesites, but also the experience of African American mourners who may have experienced racism when attending funerals or visiting graves in segregated sections.

Desegregation for new burials began immediately following President Truman's Executive Order in 1948, and Arlington National Cemetery has been fully integrated ever since.

LESSON ACTIVITIES

- Introduction/Anticipatory Set: 2 mins
 - Display PowerPoint Slide 1
 - Explain who the United States Colored Troops (U.S.C.T.) were and instruct students to make a guess on their worksheet about why the U.S.C.T. might be significant in American history.
 - Encourage students to think about the status of African Americans in the United States at the time of the Civil War who do they think the U.S.C.T. fought for, and why?
- PowerPoint Presentation: 10-15 mins









o Students should answer the questions on their worksheet while the teacher presents the

Slide

Slide 1: United States Colored Troops

information in the PowerPoint.



Notes for Presentation

In this lesson we will discuss the United States Colored Troops, or U.S.C.T., which was the official U.S. Army name for regiments of African American (and some Native American) men that were raised during the Civil War. At the time, "colored" was a common way to refer to people who were not white; today it is considered more appropriate to say "people of color."

Instruct students to make a guess about why the U.S.C.T. might be significant in American history. Encourage students to think about the status of African Americans in the United States at the time of the Civil War.

Encourage students to think about the status of African Americans in the United States at the time of the Civil War who do they think the U.S.C.T. fought for, and why?

Slide 2: Background

BACKGROUND

- . More than 178,000 African American men served in Union Army as part of U.S.C.T.
- In service from May 1863-December 1867
- · First time U.S. Army actively recruited African Americans



During the Civil War, more than 178,000 African American men served in the Union Army as part of the U.S.C.T. These U.S.C.T. regiments only existed for a short time – from May 1863 to December 1867 - but they provided invaluable service in restoring the Union. Though African Americans had fought during the Revolutionary War, the formation of the U.S.C.T. represented the first time the U.S. Army actively recruited African Americans, and their service opened the door for future generations of African Americans in the military.

Slide 3: Eager to Fight

EAGER TO FIGHT

- At beginning of Civil War, African Americans were not allowed to fight for U.S. Army
- Frederick Douglass and other abolitionists believed allowing African Americans fight would help Union win the war and win rights for African Americans
- · Abraham Lincoln feared that allowing African Americans fight would push border states (where slavery was still legal) to secede



At the beginning of the Civil War, many free African American men in the north rushed to enlist in the U.S. military. However, they were turned away based on a 1792 law barring African Americans from bearing arms for the U.S. Army—African Americans were only allowed to hold non-combat positions within the military.

Frederick Douglass and other leading abolitionists began pressuring the Lincoln administration to permit African









Americans to join the Union Army, as they believed African American participation in the war would not only help the Union win the war and end slavery in the United States, but also that military participation would guarantee African Americans' right to citizenship.

For the first year of the war, Lincoln refused to permit African Americans to enlist in the military out of concern that this would cause border states (where slavery was still legal) to secede. By mid-1862, however, the U.S. Army desperately needed reinforcements and it urged the federal government to reconsider the blanket ban.

Slide 4: Beginnings

BEGINNINGS

- Aug. 1861 First Confiscation Act: freed enslaved people fighting or working for the Confederate military
- Mar. 1862 Second Confiscation Act: freed enslaved people whose owners were loyal to Confederacy
- Jul. 1862 Militia Act: permitted African Americans in noncombat military positions
- Jan. 1863 Emancipation Proclamation: permitted African Americans to serve in the U.S. Army and Navy
- May 1863 Federal government formed the Bureau of Colored Troops and the U.S.C.T.



The Civil War caused many people to question the status of African Americans in the United States, in the Confederacy and in the war. In August 1861, Congress passed the First Confiscation Act, which freed all enslaved people whose owners were fighting for or working for the Confederate military.

One year later, Congress passed two additional pieces of legislation regarding African Americans: the Second Confiscation Act and the Militia Act of 1862. The Second Confiscation Act freed all enslaved people whose owners were supporters of the Confederacy. The Militia Act permitted African Americans to join the U.S. military in noncombat roles (i.e. cook, guard, laborer).

[Note: The major difference between the first and second confiscation acts is that the second act allowed for the seizure of all Confederate property (including enslaved people) whether or not that property had been used in support of the rebellion. The first allowed only the seizure of property being used to support the Confederacy.]

African Americans were not allowed to serve in combat positions in the U.S. military until President Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863. In May 1863, the War Department established the Bureau of Colored Troops and designated all African American







commanded by white officers.



Slide 5: Discrimination and Prejudice

DISCRIMINATION AND PREJUDICE

- Often assigned noncombat roles
- · Regiments commanded by white officers
- Received lower pay until soldiers protested; Congress granted all African American soldiers equal pay in March 1865
- National cemeteries usually segregated and sometimes even barred burials of African American soldiers



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American regiments.

Even within the Union Army, African American soldiers did not receive equal treatment with white soldiers. Though they were authorized to participate in combat, many U.S.C.T. regiments were assigned to non-combat roles. Some African Americans were commissioned as officers, but mostly in non-combat roles, and all U.S.C.T. regiments were

regiments as United States Colored Troops, or U.S.C.T. The Bureau was charged to recruit, train and manage all African

Initially, African American soldiers received lower pay than white soldiers. However, after multiple protests by African American soldiers, in June 1864 Congress passed a bill authorizing equal and full back pay to enlisted African American troops who had been free men as of April 19, 1861. Congress granted all African American soldiers equal pay in March 1865.

U.S.C.T. soldiers also did not always receive the same treatment in death as white soldiers. National cemeteries were generally segregated, and the sections for African Americans were sometimes neglected. In some cases, they were denied burial in national cemeteries and were instead buried in cemeteries set aside for freedpeople (former slaves). At Arlington National Cemetery, U.S.C.T. burials began only months after the cemetery opened in 1864. The oldest section of the current cemetery, which was initially fairly isolated from Arlington House and the first military burials, contains the graves of white Union soldiers and government employees, U.S.C.T. soldiers, and freedpeople. Later, U.S.C.T. soldiers were also buried in a segregated section across from white Union soldiers and a section of Confederate soldiers.

Slide 6: Dangerous Conditions

African American soldiers faced greater dangers while fighting in the Civil War than their white counterparts. In multiple instances, Confederate soldiers massacred African American soldiers who were surrendering, and in May 1863, the Confederate Congress declared that any captured









DANGEROUS CONDITIONS

- · Confederate soldiers massacred surrendering African American soldiers
- May 1863 Confederate Congress ared captured African American soldiers would be treated as rebelling slaves, not risoners of war
- July 1863 President Lincoln suspended POW exchanges until Confederacy agreed to treat African American prisoners as soldiers. Confederacy would not agree and exchanges mostly ended.



African American soldiers would be treated as rebelling slaves, not as prisoners of war (POW). This meant that captured African American soldiers could be executed or sold back into slavery and would not be included in prisoner exchanges.

On July 30, 1863, President Lincoln suspended POW exchanges until the Confederacy agreed to treat African American prisoners the same as white prisoners. The Confederate Army refused to do so, and from that point on, prisoner exchanges largely ceased, causing overcrowding in both Union and Confederate POW camps.

Slide 7: After the Civil War

AFTER THE CIVIL WAR

- · Many regiments of Union Army disbanded after Civil War ended in April 1865
- Some U.S.C.T. regiments remained in service and were sent to South as garrison troops
- U.S.C.T. regiments gradually disbanded 1865-1867, which left fewer soldiers to prevent racial violence in South
- Service of U.S.C.T. proved value of allowing African Americans into Army
- · 1866 Congress created six all-African American regiments



After the Civil War ended in April 1865, many regiments of the Union Army were disbanded, and soldiers were free to return home. Some U.S.C.T. regiments remained in service, however, and a number of them were sent to the South as garrison troops (troops stationed in one place for its protection and defense). These assignments were not easy, as white southerners did not welcome the presence of any federal troops, much less African American federal troops. From 1865 to 1867, U.S.C.T. regiments were gradually disbanded. This left fewer soldiers available to assist with peacekeeping in the South, and incidents of racial violence grew.

Though the U.S. Army disbanded all of the U.S.C.T. regiments in the years following the Civil War, their service proved the value of allowing African Americans into the regular Army. In 1866, Congress created six all-African American regiments, which would go on to serve in the American West as the Buffalo Soldiers.

Slide 8: Notable Members



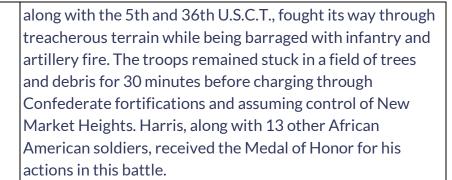
James H. Harris

Not much is known about James H. Harris' early life; records show he worked as a farmer before enlisting in the 38th U.S.C.T. Regiment in 1864. He eventually rose to the rank of sergeant.

During the Battle of Chaffin's Farm and New Market Heights (VA) on September 29th, 1864, Harris's regiment,







Harris was mustered out of service January 25th, 1867. For the remainder of his life, he worked as a carpenter in Washington, D.C. and received a military pension of \$12 per month. Harris is interred at Arlington National Cemetery

Milton Holland

Milton Holland was born into slavery, though he was later purchased and freed by his presumed father, a white politician. Holland enlisted in the Fifth U.S.C.T. regiment in 1863 and rose to the rank of Sergeant Major. During the Battle of Chaffin's Farm and New Market Heights (VA) on September 29th, 1864, Holland assumed command of the regiment after all the white commanding officers were killed or wounded in battle. He gallantly led his men as they routed the attack of the Confederate Army and took control of New Market Heights, along with the 36th and 38th U.S.C.T. Holland received the Medal of Honor for his actions that day.

Holland's career after the Civil War included working as a clerk at the U.S. Treasury Department, overseeing U.S. government accounts as an auditor, opening his own law office and founding the first African American-owned insurance company in Washington, D.C. Holland is interred at Arlington National Cemetery.

Martin Robison Delany

Martin R. Delany was born free in 1812 in Charles Town, Virginia (now West Virginia). Delany studied medicine and was even able to enroll at Harvard Medical School in 1850, before protests from white students forced him to









withdraw. During the 1840s Delany founded and edited a Black newspaper and co-edited Frederick Douglass' antislavery newspaper. In 1852, he wrote a manifesto calling for African Americans to emigrate to Central America, and in 1859 he wrote "Blake; or the Huts of America," a novel about a fugitive slave who leads an uprising. Delany's more radical views placed him in opposition to most mainstream abolitionists, and he has been called the "Father of Black Nationalism." During the Civil War, he helped recruit U.S.C.T. soldiers, and in 1865 he met with Abraham Lincoln and argued that African Americans should be allowed to lead soldiers of their own race. Lincoln was impressed, and in February 1865, Delany was commissioned as a major, the first African American field officer in the U.S. Army. After the Civil War, Delany remained active in politics, business and medicine.

Slide 9: Quote

"Let the black man get upon his person the brass letter, U.S., let him get an eagle on his button, and a musket on his shoulder and bullets in his pocket, there is no power on earth that can deny that he has earned the right to citizenship."

— Frederick Douglass, April 6, 1863

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Read the quote as a group or instruct each student to silently read.

"Let the Black man get upon his person the brass letter, U.S., let him get an eagle on his button, and a musket on his shoulder and bullets in his pocket, there is no power on earth that can deny that he has earned the right to citizenship." — Frederick Douglass, April 6, 1863

Frederick Douglass advocated for African Americans to join the military, believing this would lead to greater respect and equal rights. Was he right?

Depending on students' prior knowledge, you may choose to discuss or simply share the points below:

In 1865, the 13th Amendment was passed, which abolished slavery in the United States. In 1868, the 14th Amendment granted citizenship to all persons born or naturalized in the United States – including formerly enslaved people – and guaranteed all citizens equal protection of the law. In 1870, the 15th Amendment was passed, which prohibited the government from denying citizens their right to vote based on their race, color or previous condition of servitude.







However, despite the provisions of the 13th, 14th and 15th amendments, many states passed laws known as "Black Codes" that heavily restricted the rights and liberties of African Americans. Even in states that had opposed slavery, many public spaces, institutions and neighborhoods were segregated, and African Americans faced intense discrimination and prejudice. African Americans were allowed to serve in the U.S. military, but quotas often restricted how many could enlist, and the military remained segregated until 1948.

Although the U.S.C.T. had proven that African Americans were eager to fight for the United States and its ideals, it would be many years before they would receive equal protection and rights under the law.

Slide 10: Connections



Now that you've been introduced to the United States Colored Troops, what connections can you make to other things you have learned in class?

- Conclusion: 3 mins
 - Display PowerPoint Slide 10
 - Instruct students to complete their worksheet by writing a few sentences about connections they can make between the history of the United States Colored Troops and other topics you have covered in class. Encourage students to share as time allows.

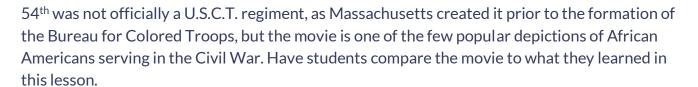
LESSON EXTENSIONS:

- Using pension records, learn about individual soldiers who served in the U.S.C.T. and their families. Pension files for U.S.C.T. veterans reveal a lot of biographical details. Because Black soldiers were rarely in the public record prior to the Civil War, in order to claim their military pensions they needed to provide detailed documentation and testimonies about their marriages, children and other biographical information. Source: https://cfh.iaamuseum.org/united-states-colored-troops-usct-pension-files/
- Watch the scenes from the movie "Glory," which recounts the history of the 54th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment, the Union Army's second African American regiment in the Civil War. The











Planning a Visit to Arlington National Cemetery?



Arlington National Cemetery uniquely represents our nation's history, with graves of service members from every major conflict. If you are interested in more information and discussion questions to use with your class during a visit to the cemetery, detailed walking tours are available on the ANC website.

SOURCES

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IMAGES

Slide 2: *Dutch Gap, Virginia. Picket station of Colored troops near Dutch Gap canal.* Photograph. November 1864. Library of Congress. https://www.loc.gov/item/2018670817/

Slide 3: [Taylor, young drummer boy for 78th Colored Troops Infantry, in rags]. Photograph. 1864. Library of Congress. https://www.loc.gov/item/2017659601/

Slide 3: [Taylor, young drummer boy for 78th Colored Troops Infantry, in uniform with drum]. Photograph. 1864. Library of Congress. https://www.loc.gov/item/2017659602/

Slide 4: [Two unidentified African American soldiers in Union sergeant's uniforms]. Photograph. Between 1863-1865. Library of Congress. https://www.loc.gov/item/2016649615/

Slide 5: 24th Regt. U.S. Colored Troops. Let Soldiers in War, Be Citizens in Peace. Photograph of an object. 1865. Library of Congress. https://www.loc.gov/resource/ppmsca.11274/

Slide 6: *Bowser, David Bustill. Rather die freemen than live to be slaves - 3rd United States Colored Troops.* Photograph of an object. Between 1860-1870. Library of Congress. https://www.loc.gov/item/98506817/

Slide 7: Smith, William Morris. [District of Columbia. Company E, 4th U.S. Colored Infantry, at Fort Lincoln]. Photograph. Between 1863-1865. Library of Congress. https://www.loc.gov/item/2018667050/

Slide 8: [James H. Harris, three-quarter length portrait, seated, facing front]. Photograph. Library of Congress. https://www.loc.gov/item/97506092/

Slide 8: [Christian A. Fleetwood, his friend Milton M. Holland, head and shoulders, facing right, in uniform]. Photograph. 1863. Library of Congress. https://www.loc.gov/item/2006684595/

Slide 8: *Martin Robison Delany.* Illustration. 1865. National Portrait Gallery. https://npg.si.edu/object/npg NPG.76.101

Slide 9: Smith, William Morris. *Band of 107th U.S. Colored Infantry.* Photograph. 1865. Library of Congress. https://www.loc.gov/resource/ppmsc.02781/

Slide 9: [Unidentified African American soldier in Union uniform with wife and two daughters]. Photograph. Between 1863-1865. Library of Congress. https://www.loc.gov/item/2010647216/